VOLUME 32 / NO 3 JUNE

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

SALVATION ARMY'S GENERAL BOOTH AND DAUGHTER EVANGELINE

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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This monthly publication is subsidized by the Ruth Allison Lilly Fund

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EDITORIAL

Fellowship Activities

SPRING is when our Board of Trustees meets, and this year's meeting, in April, brought about some important changes in Fellowship in Prayer which are appropriately announced on this page.

First of all, there were changes on the Board itself. The following individuals were elected to be Trustees:

Dr Gloria Merchant graciously agreed to complete the unexpired term of her husband Francis. A member of the Fellowship since 1959, she has been a concert pianist and holds a Ph.D. in music history. She has taught for more than twenty-five years, at many colleges throughout the South, subjects ranging from piano and music theory to American and European history.

Emily Sargent Councilman served as a Trustee from 1972 until 1975 when she and her husband the late Reverend Robert Councilman resigned because of his failing health. An accomplished writer, she has been recognized by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, the North Carolina Poetry Society, the Deep South Writers Conference and the Philadelphia Writers Conference. She has served the Fellowship as a Contributing Editor and Advisor for many years.

Dr Mary Yiu, the Fellowship's current Treasurer, was born and raised in China. After graduation from Central China University, she taught English at the University of Nanking. She came to this country in 1946, obtained her M.A. from Northwestern in 1948, her Ph.D. from Harvard in 1952. Until 1973, she taught Chinese language and comparative literature, concentrating on the Orient, at Brooklyn College of CUNY.

Herrymon Maurer served as our Executive Secretary from 1977 to 1978 and has been a regular contributor to the pages of this publication. Educated at Dartmouth and the University of Pittsburgh, he has been an editor for *Fortune* magazine and author of many magazine articles and books in the fields of business, international relations, China and Japan, cultural anthropology, religion, and biography. He has served actively on the boards and advisory committees of many Quaker organizations.

Since the Board of Trustees is the governing body of Fellowship in Prayer, these newcomers are highly important to its future and those of us who work for it day by day.

Valuable contributions have been made to the Fellowship by others not on the board. **Nixeon Civille Handy**, who frequently writes for this publication, distributed four hundred copies of it to the Christian Writers Conference at Warner Pacific College, which institution gratifyingly asked us for four hundred more to be distributed to students. And **Mrs Mildred Seydell**, a longtime friend of the Fellowship, sent a check for five hundred dollars to be used to pay for copies of the publication to be sent to the libraries of colleges and universities in this country. *(Continued on page 38)*

Destroying Egoism

by F. SAMUEL BRAINARD

SOME years ago when I was out in California and walking the Santa Monica beach, I had a mystical experience. I remember it as one of the most peaceful, contented moments of my life: I had the feeling that I could stand there like that for all of eternity without ever getting bored. But what is more important to this subject is how that experience ended.

It lasted for all of maybe one-half second before this little voice in my head said, "Wow, look at that!" and blew it all away.

Well, that was the ego's work. I had wanted very much to have such an experience and was quite pleased when it happened.

I have not liked my own egoism much. I have considered it an obstacle on my way to better moments. But the effort to destroy egoism can be enormously frustrating. The ego seems to feed on pride of any kind whatever, even pride over its own destruction. How can I destroy an opponent that is nourished and strengthened by my own desire for victory? The wanting for victory in itself seems to ensure the ego's triumph.

There is a Hindu story that I like in this context. It is called "Face of Glory." The legend begins with the case of an infinitely ambitious king who through extraordinary austerities had gained the power to unseat the gods and was now sole sovereign of the universe. His name was Jalandhara, "Water Carrier," and he conceived the impudent notion of challenging even Shiva, the supreme sustainer of the world . . . . The king's idea was to demand that Shiva should surrender to him the goddess Parvati, his wife, and to this end he sent as messenger a terrible monster called Rahu, "the Seizer," whose usual role was to seize and eclipse the moon.

Rahu approached the Lord of Life and Death, and when he had stated Jalandhara's demand, the god simply widened that third eye between his brows, whereupon a flash of lightning shot forth, striking the earth and taking the form of a lion-headed demon whose alarming body, lean, huge, and emaciated, gave notice of insatiable hunger. Its throat roared like thunder; its two eyes burned like fire; the mane, disheveled, floated far and wide into space.

Clearly its strength was irresistible. Rahu was aghast and did the only thing left for him to do. He threw himself on Shiva's mercy, and the god—for such is the way of gods—granted protection.

This, however, only created a new predicament, since the ravenous half-lion, who was nothing if not hunger incarnate, now had nothing to eat. And he, too, turned to the god, imploring him to furnish a victim. Whereupon Shiva, with one of those inspirations such as occur only to the greatest, suggested that the monster should eat himself—to which work the prodigy immediately turned and the gorgeous banquet began.

Commencing with his feet and hands, continuing through his legs and arms, the monster, ravenous and unable to stop, let his teeth go right on chopping through his belly, chest, and even his neck, until there was nothing left but a face. And the god, who had been watching with delight this epitomization of the self-consuming mystery that is life, smiled, when the feat had been accomplished, upon what remained of that creature of his wrath, and said to it: "You shall be known henceforth as Kirttimukha, 'Face of Glory,' and shall abide forever at my door. No one who fails to worship you will ever obtain my grace."

That is the story. It may refer to other things besides just the ego, but that is where it touched my life the most. It showed me that I could involve my ego in its own destruction: I could use its own great hunger on itself by turning that appetite back around to take pleasure in its own disintegration.

This story also showed me that, providing the ego fed on itself, it was okay to have one. I need not necessarily feel guilty any more about my egoism.

Since then, this business of my ego has begun to become something I watch as from a place detached, sometimes with a bit of amusement as well.

Perhaps I notice that today I am feeling especially contented and spiritually fulfilled, and with that recognition comes this self-righteous pride. Ah, but if I am truly on my spiritual path, where did this self-righteousness come from? So, immediately there comes this curious phenomenon of my ego noticing its own involvement and taking a good 'chomp' out of that self-righteousness. I experience this as a kind of "Oh, no, not again" kind of feeling.

Now, let's say my ego here is really, doing its job and is firmly attached to my being without any egocentrism whatsoever. Since shame comes from egocentrism just as much as pride, this "Oh, no" feeling will not do, either. Likewise, it will not do to be ashamed of being ashamed. The only realistic recourse for the ego is to accept this demeaning situation as fine and good—perhaps with an "It's okay to be a fool" kind of feeling. After all, acceptance of this demeaning spiritual situation could certainly be taken as proof of my own non-egocentrism, could it not?

This can go on. Now I can't get self-righteous again over how humble I have become, creating another round of shame and humbling. Ultimately, however, if all goes well, I arrive at a place of very contented humility that has neither pride nor shame attached, a place back on my spiritual path.

God's Plan

GOD has a plan for me. It is hidden within me, just as the oak is hidden within the acorn, or the rose within the bud. As I yield myself more fully to God, His plan expresses itself more perfectly through me. I can tell when I am in tune with it, for then my mind and my heart are filled with a deep inner peace. This peace fills me with a sense of security, with joy, and a desire to take the steps that are a part of the plan.

God's plan for me is a perfect part of a larger plan. It is designed for the good of all and not for me alone. It is a many-sided plan and reaches out through all the people I meet. All the events and people who come into my life are instruments of the unfolding of this plan.

God has chosen those people He wants me to know, to love, and to serve. We are continually being drawn to one another in ways that are not coincidental. I pray that I may become a better instrument to love and to serve and that I may become more worthy to receive the love and service of others.

I ask the Father within me for only those things which He wants me to have. I know that these benefits will come to me at the right time and in the right way. This inner knowing frees my mind and heart from all fear, greed, jealousy, anger, and resentment. It gives me courage and faith to do those things which I feel are mine to do. I no longer look with envy at what others are receiving. Therefore, I do not cut myself off from God, the giver of all good things.

God's gifts to me can be many times greater than I am now receiving. I pray that I may increase my capacity to give, for I can give only as I receive, and receive only as I give.

I believe that when I cannot do those things I desire to do, it is because God has closed one door only to leave ajar a better and larger door. If I do not see the door just ahead, it is because I have not seen, heard, or obeyed God's guidance. It is then that God uses the trouble of seeming failure which may result to help me face myself, and see the new opportunity before me.

The real purpose of my life is to find God within my own mind and heart, and to help my fellowmen. I thank my Father for each experience which helps me to surrender my will to His Will. For only as I lose myself in the consciousness of His great presence can His plan for my life be fulfilled.

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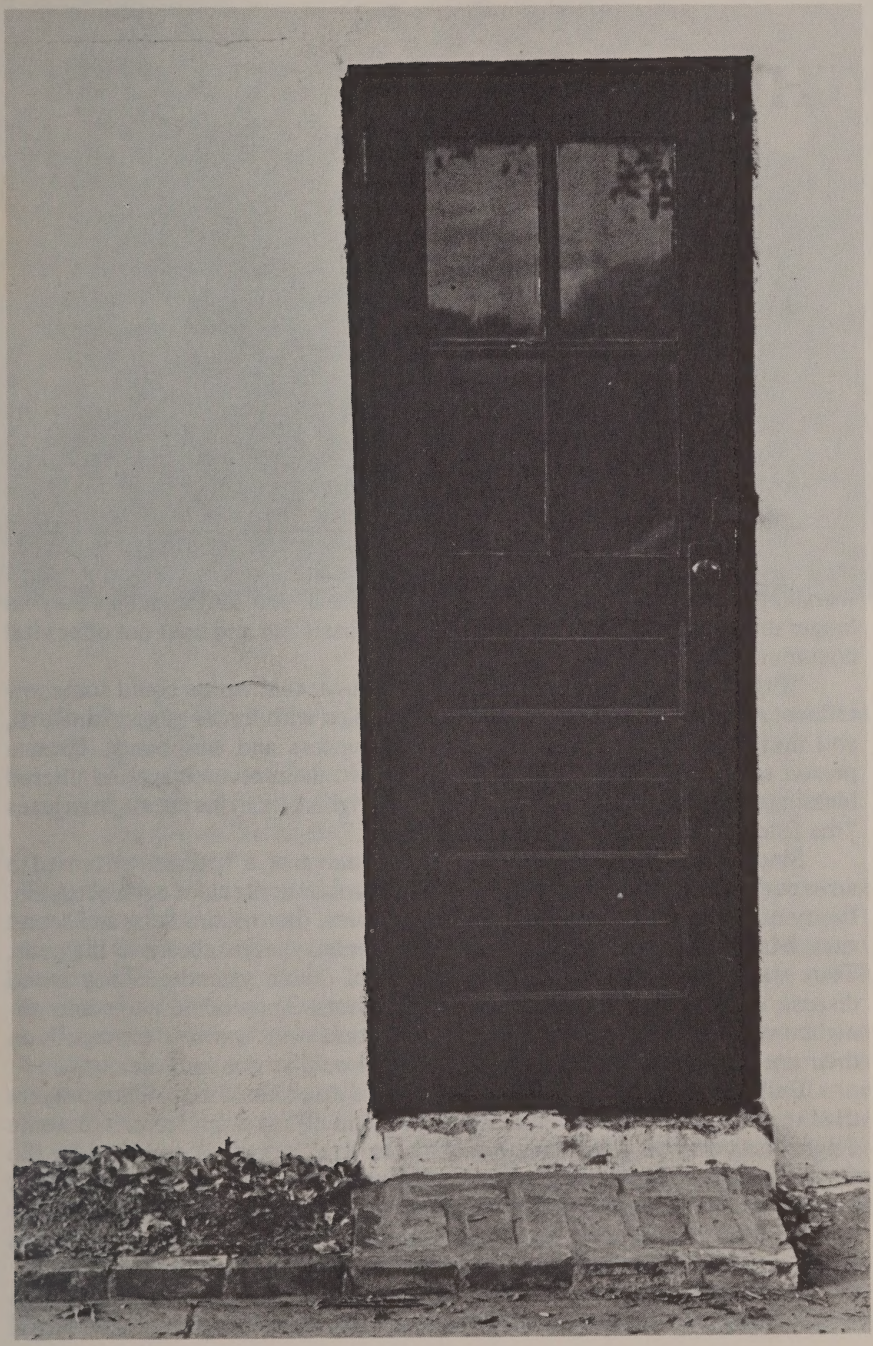

PRAYER

THE HEART HAS REASONS

by KEN BAZYN

"It's me, it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer,
Not my brother, not my sister,
But it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer."
—Negro Spiritual

LITURGIES come and go. Musical tastes vary from one generation to the next. Theologies are "in" one decade and "out" the next. Even religious architecture is in a constant state of flux. But prayers seem encrusted with the ages, whether it's the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* or the Jewish *Daily Prayer Book.* Often these beautifully worded prayers express the spontaneous feelings of our hearts, but at other times they resemble magical spells. Thus, worshippers have been known to recite prayers in ancient languages they no longer understand. At that point religion has fossilized and does not offer vital communion with a living God.

"Primitive" man prayed because he thought that words could somehow influence life. For him, the universe was peopled with forces of good and evil, and these had to be conciliated to insure success and well-being. Thus, a person said kind things to the gods, addressed them reverently, and uttered blessings on their behalf. As the Greek playwright Aeschylus puts it, man juses "the force of the mouth for someone's good."

Since nothing happened by chance in his universe, a "primitive" turned to an expert—the magician—to discover an appropriate ritual for each occasion. Every magician had his own repertoire of chants, dances, amulets, and secret rites. Magicians, men believed, had been granted special access to the gods. They were seers who beheld the fullness of divine splendor. They cured disease with herbs and other odd-looking plants. They could enter into all-night trances and become oblivious to pain. Some were known to cast spells on their enemies and within days their targets would swoon and die.

Evil, according to "primitive" peoples, lay outside of man. Thus prayers tried to manipulate the universe: keep the blight off my crops, send it on some neighboring tribe.A good example of "primitive" prayer is one used by the Osage Indians: "Wohkonda (Master of Life), pity me, I am poor; give me what I need; give me success against my enemies, that I may avenge the death of my friends. May I be able to take scalps, to take horses. . . ." Men prayed in emergencies, before they attempted new ventures.

Pagan religion simply modified "primitive" man's magic. For example, in Greek and Roman religion much time was spent identifying the pertinent god

and addressing him by the right name. Catullus invokes Diana in one of his poems, then adds:

You are called Juno Lucina
by woman in childbirth,
you are called nightly Trivia, and Luna
whose light is not your own.

To make sure he has the goddess's attention, Catullus throws in every name he can think of: Diana, Juno Lucina, Trivia, and Luna. And in case this wasn't enough, the Romans frequently added some blanket expression like "whatever name you care to be called." After all, you never know, the gods could switch their names just when you were about to pray.

Another refinement in pagan prayer was evasion. It was considered more catastrophic to appeal to the wrong god or to call Him by the wrong name, than to say nothing. (According to Varro, to pray for water from Bacchus and wine from the nymphs was to behave like a comedian!) In case of an earthquake the Romans held a festival of purification and simply addressed "the responsible deity," much as the Athenians dedicated statues to "an unknown god." Or, to be even more polite, the Romans refined the formula to: "If it be a god or goddess."

Once the god's attention had been secured, the second task was to convince him that your request was reasonable and that it was in his power to fulfill it. The gods were not to be trusted. If you wanted the doors of your stable

kept closed, you might call on Janus Patulcius to accomplish the task. But, unfortunately, he was not only in charge of closing doors, but opening them as well. So it might be safer to try someone else.

There remained another problem for pagan supplicants. The gods themselves were not always in control. They, too, wore good luck charms, could be defeated by other, apparently inferior deities, and succumbed to temptation. So, even if the supplicant at last communicated with the right god, there was still some doubt that his request would be fulfilled. Thus pagans sacrificed their best animals, feeling certain that this would win the gods' allegiance. Or they made pacts with the gods: "If you do me a favor, I'll do one for you." And if a request was granted, they offered more sacrifices, presented more gifts at the altar, or bought additional idols for the home.

No wonder there was a tendency for pagan prayer to turn into legal documents with carefully worded requests, frequent repetition, a potpourri of catch-all phrases, honorary titles for the participants, and a few loopholes, inconspicously inserted, in hopes that the god wouldn't catch on. Pliny describes a typical Roman ceremony: "The chief magistrates pray by fixed formulae, taking precautions not to omit or misplace words; one person reads the prayer from a written text, the magistrate repeating it phrase by phrase, another checks it meticulously as recited; a third commands holy silence; flautist drowns out ill-omened noises."

However, not all religions in the ancient world reduced their prayers to magical formulas delivered during public ceremonies. In the Fertile Crescent, as early as the second millennium B.C., we find examples of heartfelt confessions, lamentations, spontaneous and formal thanksgivings, and expressions of a desire for greater personal piety. The terror and awe so prevalent in paganism gave way to a loving Father-Son or Mother-Daughter reationship. We see this attitude best in the Old Testament Psalms, but it is not unknown in ancient Mesopotamia. One sufferer prays:

"(Thy servant) lies cast into the waters of a morass,
seize thou His hand!
Turn the sins I committed into good!
Let the winds carry away the crimes I perpetrated!
Many are my iniquities, slip them off me like a garment!
O my God! The crimes are seven times seven, absolve my crimes!

The penitent abases himself before his god, admits wrongdoing, and weeps in abject humility. However, he is still confident that his petitions will eventually be heard. The concept of god has changed. He has become the god of *my* salvation. He hears the cries of His people. He knows His creature. And He wants the best for them.

Before Him one can passionately plead as a child, pouring out the significant with the insignificant, as one would with a friend. Before such a god, much ado about postures, i.e., hands at one side as in Egypt, or hands folded as in Sumaria. Dogged persistence, heaped-up flattery, and beautiful rote phrases

are counted as vanity. And when calamity strikes, the ideal penitent doesn't escape through magical rites, nor plead extenuating circumstances, nor minimize his offense—he looks within. He may complain as the Babylonian did:

What seems good to oneself,
is a crime to God.
What to one's heart seems bad,
is good before one's God.
Who may comprehend the minds of the gods
in heaven's depth?

The relationship between God and man is more intimate, more personal. The penitent might approach God on his knees, earnestly begging for mercy, or speak freely in the field, with hands outstretched. The true believer prays like the publican in Jesus' parable, with his eyes figuratively cast down, feeling, as Isaiah puts it, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." When the believer prays, he frequently uses the plural, petitioning God's blessings not only for himself, but his neighbor, too. Or, as in Eight Benedictions in Judaism, he begins with personal needs and before he's done, includes the community and nation as well.

In Christianity and Judaism this intimate relationship between God and man reaches its zenith. Prayer's goal is dialogue. Typical requests cover wisdom, strength, and virtue. Prayer is the hallmark of both religions, either in corporate worship or in private communion.

Also, both religions encourage soul-searching and not the primitive manipulation of unseen forces. As Maimonides, the twelfth century Jewish philosopher, says, "Before engaging in prayer, the worshipper ought to go aside for a little in order to bring himself into a devotional frame of mind, and then he must pray quietly and with feeling, not like one who carries a weight, throws it away and goes further. Then after prayer the worshipper ought to sit quiet for a little and then depart. The pious folk of old waited an hour before prayer and an hour after, and engaged in prayer for a whole hour."

So in Judiasm and Christianity there are prayers for the sick, since disease is contrary to God's perfect will and prayers for spiritual growth, because God seeks to perfect every believer in character and discernment. It is an unencumbered form of prayer. A far cry from primitive magic!

●

Take, Lord, into Your possession, my complete freedom of action, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, all that I have, all that I own: it is your gift to me, I now return it to You. It is all Yours, to be used simply as you wish. Give me Your Love and Your grace; it is all I need.

—St. Ignatius of Loyola

CONVERSATION WITH A QUAKER

"Opening the Way"

PHOTO-ESSAY BY TOM DUNHAM

ABOUT a year ago I had the good fortune to meet Esther Todd. I was producing an educational filmstrip and needed to find for a series about different lifestyles "an elderly, self-reliant woman." A co-worker suggested Esther.

Perhaps nothing says so much about Esther as the fact that just minutes after we were introduced, and despite the awkwardness of tape-recorders and cameras, I had the most pleasant feeling of being in the company of an old friend. Her warmth, gentle manner, quick humor, and seemingly irrepressible energy dissolved all the barriers that usually stand between new acquaintances. When the job was done, I made a private resolution to get together with her again. Later, I learned through a friend that Esther belonged to the Friends—she was a Quaker—and that was the all excuse I needed.

Esther and I began our talk with some biographical background—a

delightful story in itself. She was born in Melrose, Mass., educated in New England, and after college began what was to become a long and very active career in the Y.W.C.A. Over the years, beginning in the 1920's, she worked in northern New Jersey, Philadelphia, Buffalo, New Bedford, and reached Princeton in 1950. It was there she joined the Quakers.

FIP: What brought you to the Friends? Why did you join?
E.T.: Well, I had no real strong pacifist feelings when I moved to Princeton. I think people choose to become Quakers because of Friends they know. It rubs off, if you let it. I had Quaker friends in Philadelphia, and I'd been to conferences and camps run by Quakers. I was always impressed with the way they actually "lived" their religion, and I thought it was about time I made a choice. I also realized that enjoying the sermons of a particular minister, regardless of denomination, wasn't a proper reason for choosing a church. One should go for the purpose of enriching one's soul. At least that's my thinking.
FIP: So it was their involvement as well as their spirituality that attracted you?
E.T.: Yes. It seemed to me that they practiced what they believed. We have this book, *Faith and Practice,* that is very inspirational and helpful for someone who seeks to go forward to live a life of religious and social involvement. You may say it serves as a Bible for many Friends. I'm sure it's one of the reasons that the works that Quakers do are not superficial, but very real.
FIP: Is there a systematic doctrine or theology underlying the Quaker faith?
E.T.: No, there isn't. The Golden Rule and a Testimony of Peace are pretty much the foundation. We have no priests or ministers because we believe that all people are equal under the eye of God. That's one of the reasons George Fox* was so unpopular with non-Quakers. He was nearly ordered to leave the country.
FIP: Didn't the notion of the perfectability of man make those early Quakers unpopular?
E.T: It certainly did. Perhaps more than any other reason. That men should aspire to be like Christ—that they could be—was blasphemous. Well, Quakers still believe that men and women can have that aspiration. After all, whose's the judge? We should each be the judge of our own lives. Take, for example, the question of honesty. I'm sure that like everyone else Quakers stray from the truth now and then. But we don't hold that there is a difference between public and private truth. That's why some Quakers refuse to take an oath before a judge or jury.

Jesus was a prophet. Just as George Fox was a prophet. Fox traveled around promoting the teachings in the Bible and, like Jesus, he preached that all men could live together in a "peaceable kingdom." That's what John Woolman had in mind in Philadelphia in the late 1700's when he called for the "beloved community."
FIP: A central activity for Quakers is the First Day Meeting. What happens at a Quaker meeting?

E.T.: A Quaker meeting is a meeting for worship. You meet in silence to talk to God. There isn't someone up front in charge as with most other services. At a Quaker worship service, it's up to the worshipper to make something out of it. Our meeting benches are in a sort of horseshoe arrangement, so we worship facing one another.

A meeting begins in silence and remains silent throughout. By that I mean there is no "service." After a while, someone who feels drawn to share something—a struggling with his or her conscience or a private concern—might stand up and say it as briefly as he can.

The person's concern might have something to do with a social problem, or it might be a problem that's very personal. Someone might say, "What can I do to help the community become more concerned about world hunger?" Someone else might express disappointment about himself, perhaps because of a lackadaisical attitude. If someone believes he has a contribution to make in this world, but is not working at it, not fulfilling his potential, he might, if he felt moved to do so, stand and express this concern.

FIP: Is there any dialogue? Any comments after someone has spoken?

E.T.: We don't encourage that. If what was said by another means something to you, then the proper response is to continue searching yourself for an answer. If you feel you might be able to help the person, you would approach him after meeting with a suggestion—or for a discussion. If what was said does not speak to your condition, then you simply continue with your own worship.

There's a bit of mysticism at work in a Quaker meeting. Quakerism works with the spirit. Friends believe there are no words to describe God, or one's relationship with God. You *feel* God. And I believe this to be true. Some Quakers tell of experience in which they felt personally moved by God.

FIP: That's an interesting point. Non-Quakers might think that people who claim to have had a direct experience with God are a bit odd or eccentric.

E.T.: That's right. But Quakers believe that God can become an actual fact in our lives. And sometimes that takes the form of a direct experience. We also believe that our lives are God-directed and that what we do we do because God is in control. When we have problems—Quakers call them "concerns"—we look to God not for the answer but to help us work at finding the answer. We ask God to "open the way."

FIP: That's a marvelous expression. How does that happen?

E.T.: Well, a Quaker might express himself at meeting and perhaps as a result of his speaking somebody who felt the same might bring up the subject after meeting and suggest that a group get together to work it out—to have what we call "a threshing session." There we might all contribute our ideas and decide upon a course of action. That's just one "way that might open." Often a person can work out his concerns privately through prayer and meditation.

Quakerism is an active faith. We try to do more than simply discuss problems. This is what we mean by faith and practice. We believe a beloved community is an active community. That's the principle reason I became a Quaker. Friends are very much involved in peace programs and education—two concerns of mine. The American Friends Service Committee is our best-

known organization. They're very active in depressed areas, setting up workshops and work-weekends. They might help a family relocate or repair some part of their home. They make a sincere effort to get to know the people they're helping. They try to become true friends.

FIP: Isn't this a lot like missionary work?

E.T.: No, it isn't. Quakers don't proselytize. They don't approach people with any idea of converting them. Quakers try to be good listeners. They go to listen and help in any way they can.

We believe that this is how governments ought to work. We should not go into an Islamic country, for instance, and say, "Okay, this is the way you're going to do things." We should look to find what it is we have in common and for a way to find a peaceful solution that is in *their* best interests. This is another way the "way might open."

FIP: How is prayer involved personally?

E.T.: I sit quietly at home or at meeting and think about what is troubling me. For example, I might have a friend who needs help because she gets mad or anxious too easily. I would want to know what I could do to help her. Perhaps by thinking about this problem, by praying for an insight, I might come to realize that just being a good listener—which is good social work, I should add—is the answer. By letting a person talk about his or her problem openly, a course of action or solution is often discovered.

FIP: So it's not necessarily a revelation or inspired message you are after?

E.T.: No. One rarely finds the answer at meeting or during other times of silence. What Quakers look for, what they seek to find, is the strength and knowledge to work things out their own way. Their action will be inspired by God, but they must take action themselves. Quakers receive few direct replies, though there was one Friend who made the remark, "I came to meeting with a problem and I found the answer. Now I am going home." So I suppose for that person there was some sort of revelation.

FIP: Are there announcements or other business matters that are discussed at meeting?

E.T.: Never during meeting. There might be a few announcements after it's over—about some action a committee is taking, or a movie or activity at the university. We do have what we call "queries." That is, questions drawn up by a committee that have to do with our faith and practice. For example, a recent query read:

> "Is your meeting a loving comunity of which Christ is the center? Do your members care for one another so deeply that they recognize one another's needs and assist in meeting these needs? To what extent does your meeting ignore differences merely to avoid possible conflicts? Are conflicts discussed with patience and forbearance in an attempt to arrive at a creative solution?"

A query addressed to each member individually read:

> "How do you contribute to the spirit of community of the members?Are you mindful of your responsibility to face differences honestly? Do you treat with respect and consideraton those who are different from you?

We have a small bulletin that's mailed to our members and often one or two queries will be included. We're expected to be mindful of them during the week, to include them in our moments of silence and prayer, and if we're so moved during meeting, to share our concerns about them with others.

FIP: How does a meeting end?

E.T.: We shake hands. There's one person, someone we call "head-of-meeting", who sits by the fireplace. After an hour or so, he or she turns and shakes hands with the nearest person. Everybody follows, and meeting is over. Isn't that a delightful way to end a worship service?

*To quote Jessamyn West's THE QUAKER READER: "Though George Fox (1624–1691) was the leader of those 'persons called Quakers,' he cannot be said to have founded the Society of Friends. Rather, it formed itself almost spontaneously as more and more people accepted the profession and practice of George Fox, having discovered in them the means by which they could bring their lives into closer accord with God."

TRANSCENDER OF GENDER

Three of the Hebrew
nouns that name
and designate
the energies
of God
are feminine—
Spirit
and Wisdom
and, sometimes,
Righteousness.
This doesn't go
to remake God
into a woman
but simply
and sublimely
stresses
that the universal
Being
is the transcender
of gender
as well as
the go-beyonder
of every other
attribute
which we theologize.

TREE OF GLORY

THE KABBALAH

Said to be a teaching given to Abraham,
it sheds light on the dilemma of mankind

by FRANCIS MERCHANT

IN the Garden of Eden stood the symbolic Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve ate the fruit thereof and were expelled. However, there was another tree. It stood in the very midst of the Garden, and Genesis calls it "the tree of life." Had Adam and Eve eaten of its fruit, would the destiny of humanity have been radically altered?

Revelations declares, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." And again, it is said that those who fulfill the law have "the right to the tree of life."

Two trees are thus described and the consequences of eating their respective fruit. We know about the results of the choice made by Adam and Eve, but rather little about the fruit borne by the tree of life. Good and evil suggest duality; life, unity. Having wandered long in the realm of opposites or polarities, might man not seek to pluck the fruit of the other tree?

Such a possibility is seldom mentioned, yet it is central to the secret doctrine known as the Kabbalah. This body of teaching has been given little prominence, yet it sheds light on the dilemma of man as he seeks to return to the paradise from which he was expelled.

Background. The origin of the Kabbalah is shrouded in mystery. It is said by some to be a teaching given by God to Abraham. In the late thirteenth century, Moses de Leon directed attention to Kabbalism by circulating his treatise *Book of Splendor.* He declared that the writings of Rabbi Simeon Ben Yohai had come into his possession. The latter lived in the second century. Sentenced to death by the Roman authorities, he hid in a cave for twelve years.

During this time he wrote the Zohar, or *Book of Splendor.* Among other authors who made notable contributions were Moses Cordovero and Isaac Luria.

The term "kabbalah" means "traditional lore." Kabbalists make the astonishing claim that they possess the secret doctrine that is implicit in the Old Testament but not elaborated there. The Tables of the Law that Moses brought back from Mount Sinai, differed from the first set, which he broke, and dealt with the wisdom of the Tree of Life. The nature of the original revelation is the theme of their studies. Kabbalism does not reject biblical tradition, but elaborates it along mystical lines.

What emerges from Kabbalistic studies is a cosmology that sheds new light on Old Testament teachings. The nature of God and his creation as well as the predicament of man as he seeks to return to the spiritual source from which he came are explicated in a system of metaphysics which adds a new dimension to the traditional biblical presentation.

Curiously enough, many Jews have not been aware of the metaphysical treasure of Kabbalism that is part of their heritage, and which their learned scholars have shared with the rest of the world. The light of this teaching is a Lamp that illumines man's predicament and opportunity on this plane of illusive duality.

Emanation. Man is given life, but the meaning of what he has received is for him to discover. Who, it has been asked in all ages, bestowed this gift upon the human race? Each religion has answered this question after its own fashion.

In the eighteenth century, many thoughtful men held that the Creator, after fashioning the universe, retired from the scene and allowed universal law to reign supreme. This concept defines God transcendent, the Creator separate from his creation. This view places a vast gap between man and his maker.

Kabbalism proposes a more metaphysical theory. The principle that lay behind the creation is *Ain Suph*—the Boundless, the Limitless Light, the Unmanifest. About it nothing can be postulated. Even the imagination, stretched to its utmost, cannot apprehend this divine darkness. However, it projected a beam of light and thus set in motion the energies that fashioned the universe. The Unmanifest Absolute limited itself, and its limitation was revealed as the vast universe. In order to make itself known, divine darkness clothed itself with the garment of light.

By this act an archetypal form came into being, namely the Tree of Life. This magical creation has ten branches, each one representative of an attribute of the One Life. At the head of this Tree is God the Creator, in whom all duality is resolved in harmonious unity. He is called "the Ancient of Days" and finds expression through wisdom and understanding, thus forming a primordial trinity whose ideation gives rise to the world and sustains it.

Its thought produces a secondary trinity composed of mercy, justice, and their harmonious blending in beauty.

A third trinity is formed by their activity, known as victory, glory, and foundation.

The resultant effect is the formation of the Kingdom, the plane on which mortal human beings struggle and strive in their coats of flesh.

Four worlds, all created by thought, are thus defined—the spiritual, intellectual, moral, and material. The primal Word is thus progressively materialized until it reaches its densest concretization on the plane that we apprehend with the senses. The universe, then, is the objective manifestation of subjective thought. All things, therefore, are the garments through which divine ideation reveals itself. According to this theory, every visible object proclaims the glory of God.

The physical world is thus defined as the end-result or emanation of divine ideation. It follows that God is not only transcendent, but immanent in every speck of His creation.

Man stands on the plane of materiality and contemplates the spiritual source to which he owes his existence, separated from it by many veils. His perceptions are limited by his senses and his mental assessments by the knots of duality. His analytical mind breaks up reality into fragmentary elements so that the vision of unity is lost—and this is the allegorical significance involved in Adam's eating the apple.

Can man, instead of wandering further into materiality, move upward toward the source from which he emanated? On the answer to this question rests the destiny of the individual and of humanity.

Man, the Microcosm. Does man have the capacity to embark upon the journey to the halls of light? Is he condemned to be alternately tossed aloft and hurled down by the capricious waves of circumstance?

The Kaballah declares that man is made in the image of God (a microcosm mirroring the macrocosm)—but the god-like powers are sealed up within him, and he is often unaware of their existence. Neither the imperfect senses nor the purely analytical mind will reveal the divinity of which he is an expression.

Man can approach God by contemplating His attributes, say the Kabbalists. When Moses said to the Lord, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," he was told, "Thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen." The Lord, then, is to be known by his attributes. The Kaballah describes them as mercy, justice, beauty, wisdom, and understanding. It should, however, always be borne in mind that "the source is one." Of the attributes, it is said, "The world upheld by mercy and justice," and, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding," and further, "Give beauty for ashes."

It is not man's assignment to wait passively, but actively to invoke the Highest. The higher world cannot act unless the lower calls forth the response. "From below must come the impulse to move the power above. . .the yearning from below brings about the completion above."

There is another way to unravel the knots in human nature. Many people, though they know it not, employ this technique. It is the path of suffering that burns out all impurities and illusions. "All gates to heaven have been closed, but the gates of tears have not been closed. . . .Standing over the gates of tears are certain heavenly beings, and they break down the bars and locks of iron,

and allow the tears to enter, so that the entreaties of the grieving supplicants go through and reach the holy King, and the place of the Divine Presence is grieved by the sorrow of him who prays, as it stands written: 'In their afflictions He is afflicted.' " Rightly understood, suffering is a path to God. Out of his tribulations a man may weave a golden garland.

Awe and love bind the highest and lowest in unitive bonds. Human beings, created either male or female, express the inherent dualism of this dimension of awareness. When drawn together by love, they experience a sense of unity. The two become one—a significant symbol. Duality is transcended. The Kabbalah, elaborating on the unifying power of love, tells us that it "links the higher with the lower degrees; it is love that links everything to the level where all must become one."

The Three Pillars. Contraction and expansion are universal principles. They represent a primary set of polarities. The Tree of Life consists of three pillars—one on the left (contraction), one on the right (expansion), and one in the middle (balance). Two of these columns, the extremes, stand for opposites, whereas the central column concerns synthesis, the union of the contraries in cooperative unity.

Kabbalism suggests that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil contained but two pillars—the right and the left—but lacked the central pillar where the opposites are harmonized. Adam's choice, then, involved movement from one extreme to the other, never discovering the middle path where the contraries are transcended and balance is known.

The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil caused man to swing like a pendulum from one side to the other, never comprehending the harmony that holds all things in balance. "So did Adam move back from agitation to rest, from judgment to mercy, from life to death: never consistent in any one thing, because of the effect of that place, which is thus known as 'the flaming sword which turned every way,' from this direction to that, from good to evil, from mercy to judgment, from peace to war." The life of the average man is usually neither wholly good nor wholly bad, but is characterized by a swinging from one pole to the other.

The central position (or Sephira) is known as beauty (Tifereth) and corresponds in the human being to the heart. This organ is the seat of life, the regulator of the physical mechanism. Spiritually, it is the light of the heart that reveals the path to unity. The mind analyzes and discriminates, but "out of the heart are the issues of life."

Man: Representative of God on Earth. "Do not think that man is but flesh, skin, bones, and veins," says the Kabbalah. "What really makes man is his soul; and the things we call skin, flesh, bones, and veins are but a garment, a cloak; they do not constitute man. The skin represents the firmament, which extends everywhere and covers everything like a cloak. . . . The bones and veins represent the celestial chariot, the forces that exist within, the servants of God. However, all this is but a cloak; for the deep mystery of celestial man is within."

Therefore, this fragile stick of matter called man, ephemeral creature of a

moment, is the representative of God on Earth, the bearer of divinity. As God limited himself in the universe, so man limits himself in the constrictive confines of the body. The celestial is imprisoned in the terrestrial. By his thoughts and acts, he either strengthens the power of the material or liberates the essence that is spiritual.

The Tree of Life is not only an archetypal abstraction; it is incorporated in the dimensions of the human form. The different aspects are discoverable in the structure of the body. The head is the crown of synthesis; the right and left parts of the brain, wisdom and understanding; the left and right arms, justice and mercy; the thighs, victory and glory; the heart, beauty; the feet, the Kingdom. The aspects of God are thus written into the very construction of the body—a form all men use, but few comprehend.

Exile. In the highest worlds is the "Holy Empire of Light," the source of creation. The lowest part of the Tree of Life is Malkuth, "the place of shells," where spirit asumes its densest expression; but here, too, is the Bride (Shekinah) who awaits reunion with the Supernal King.

On this outer plane of concretion, man is enmeshed in the veils of materiality. He is aware of the forms through which the divine expresses itself, but not of the creative power that brought all forms into being. The garment of God he beholds, but not that which it clothes. In the midst of fragments and differentiation, he must achieve the vision of wholeness; in the midst of the broken lights of diversity, the celestial light of the Highest.

Of course, he is not limited to one life. Again and again he leaves the halls of light to return to the place of shells in order to learn the art of manifesting the light of the spirit in the obscuring domain of material concretion.

Sin is the obscuring of the inner light, the darkening of the understanding, the shackling of the soul ever more securely in the prison house of the body. It is as though the individual broke the vessels that hold the divine light—and as the light escapes, the darkness increases.

It is on the plane of duality that choice must be made, for in unity no such need arises. So is it said, "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. . . blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." In exile, on the outer planes of duality, man must make the choice. He must tread the way of life, which is light, or the way of death, which is darkness. To choose aright is to end the dreary days of exile and return to the eternal homeland.

Redemption. The task assigned to man is often phrased in terms of the individual, that is, the return of the spark to the divine flame that produced it. There is, however, a much broader implication. Mankind is the warrior host of the One, seeking to link the outermost with the innermost. As the lower synthesis, he is the means whereby the eternal light from above will shine in the darkness below. Man cooperates with God in this grand endeavor. "The righteous," says the Kabbalah, "are the sacrifice and the means of atonement of the universe."

"Ye shall be as gods" was the prospect that tempted Eve—but the fruit of the tree could reveal naught but the warring contraries, not the secret of

balancing or harmonizing them. Knowledge of good and evil requires that a choice be made between the two. It has taken humanity ages to make and persist in that decision. When that choice is wisely made and wrought into the fiber of striving, a human being becomes a co-worker with the gods in extending beneficent light to all the unbalanced realms of chaos.

Practical Kabbalism. In time, the metaphysical speculations became embellished with the more glamorous phenomenal aspect known as practical Kabbalism. The divine quest in such cases readily turns into conjurations and evocations that are stimulating rather than enlightening. Magicians arose who called up the spirits of the dead and wrote singular accounts of salamanders, sylphs, and undines—elemental creatures that are said to inhabit another dimension of consciousness. The desire for phenomena, a universal urge, tends to blur the eternal search for enlightenment.

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The Glory of Earth

by MARGARET FLANAGAN EICHER

On certain amber afternoons
Before day ends or night has begun
The light turns a ripe pear shade,
A kind of essence of the sun.

We see beyond sunset then:
The air itself is colored gold,
As if the Lord reached out to touch earth
Giving all the glory we could hold.

Christian Soldiers

by LIZ SCHWEBER & BOB WAITE

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
The Saints smiled gravely and they said: 'He's come.'
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Armed with Christian compassion, fortified with prayer, and organized like the military, the Salvation Army selflessly serves those in need. Now active in eighty-three nations, the Army is self-supporting and as one lifetime Salvationist put it, "We don't have anyone to answer to but God."

The Salvation Army began with General William Booth's attempt to help the street people of nineteenth century London. An ordained Methodist minister, Booth was moved by the sight of God's creatures sleeping under bridges, or slowly dying from alcoholism in the gutters of industrial slums. He started working with these men. The General wanted to bring them back into the churches. First he had to meet their physical needs: clothing, food and shelter would be given to the men at the Christian Mission in London. Then they would be sent back to the churches of the time, where parishioners were wary of these new and somewhat vulger converts and often wouldn't accept them back into the fold. These men would then cling to General Booth. This was the beginning of the Salvation Army.

Today the Salvation Army operates adult rehabilitation centers throughout the country for people with alcoholism and those without home, job, jor family. In emergencies the Salvation Army with military efficiency is quick to send its soldiers and aid. Such was the case last year when an earthquake shook southern Italy, leaving thousands without food and shelter. The Salvation Army responded by immediately dispatching food and clothing, and are now in the process gathering enough donations to help rebuild housing for those without a place to live.

In Trenton, New Jersey, between a small residential Polish community and an industrial slum, a Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center is in operation, giving alcoholic and homeless men a chance to live normal, productive lives. Captain Timothy A. Rains, the administrator of the program (see photograph at left), an ordained minister who was brought up a Salvationist and because of his seniority is a Captain, runs the center with love and interest. He says, "I don't look at this as merely a job. It's not just a job. It's a calling. That's an important difference. Part of this calling is being a counselor. I think Christ through His teachings has taught us what being a counselor is all about. When He walked the earth, He was a great counselor. He talked to people and shared prayer with them."

Growing up a Salvationist, Captain Rains would as a boy recite Vachel Lindsay's poem, "General Booth Goes To Heaven." On the following pages we are going to quote Captain Rains on several subjects and between quotes we will have lines from Vachel Lindsay's poem. You will have to supply the soft drumbeat that generally goes with it.

Alcoholism

The effect of alcohol on a man's life can be devastating. Alcohol itself is not a sinful thing, but what alcohol can do to a person is a sin. I've been in the Salvation Army all my life, because my mother and father have been Salvation Army officers. When you see what alcohol can do to a person—physically, mentally and spiritually—you learn to respect its power. It takes people completely away—away from their homes, jobs, families, and worst of all—it takes them away from themselves.

Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail:—

Prayer

We stress the spiritual part of our program, but we don't force it. We have our chapel services on Sunday. It's doctrinal—we preach the Gospel. On Wednesday, we have a looser service, so the men can learn that worship and prayer life doesn't have to be always a structured thing. Sometimes we may be in Chapel, and an inspiration will come over us, and we'll praise God by singing. The guys will pick their own songs, and it's a good time.

There's a lot of praying in the services. Privately, my wife and I feel the need to pray for all the men. Before chapel on Sunday morning we have a prayer meeting. About 15 of them come. We pray about what they're concerned about. Many times about the guys who left the program to go back to drinking. They learn to pray over their resentments to others—not to change the other, but to change their own attitudes.

Privately I counsel men individually on prayer. The biggest problem is the man saying, "I don't know how to pray." The truth is that anyone knows how to pray, but they hear these long flowery prayers and they think that's what they have to do. I try to attune them to this prayer—"Forgive me. I want to change. Help me." It's a simple prayer, but it's there.

Praying together is the best. Sometimes, in my office I pray and pray, and it seems like I'm praying to the four walls. In our prayer meetings, there's that help that comes in numbers—knowing that there are other people interested in praying with you.

For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Program

Our program is, perhaps the only one of its kind in the whole country. We treat all aspects of an alcoholic's problem. Our men stay here from six months to a year. The men who come here have no supports outside. A lot of programs have a person for 21–30 days, which is good if he still has some support to go back to.

Our program is unique because of the special emphasis we place on spiritual recovery. It is also unique because of our work therapy. We are self-supporting, because of what we we sell in our thrift stores. Our men support themselves by manning our trucks, working in our warehouses, refinishing furniture, mopping floors, and so on. The important thing is that they are working for their own rehabilitation.

Bull-necked convicts with that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare, blare
On, on upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Family Life

Out of 100% of the alcoholics that get some kind of treatment, we might be dealing with that 5% that are the worst off. What can we provide for these men? Forget the problem of alcoholism. People don't have family—I mean—looking at our entire society, the family is being ripped apart by external forces. To a large extent we have to provide a family atmosphere.

What goes on here is really a family affair. My wife and I love and care for the men, but more than that we have to discipline them. We have to tell them when they are wrong, break rules, have a bad attitude, and sometimes we have to enforce some kind of penalty.

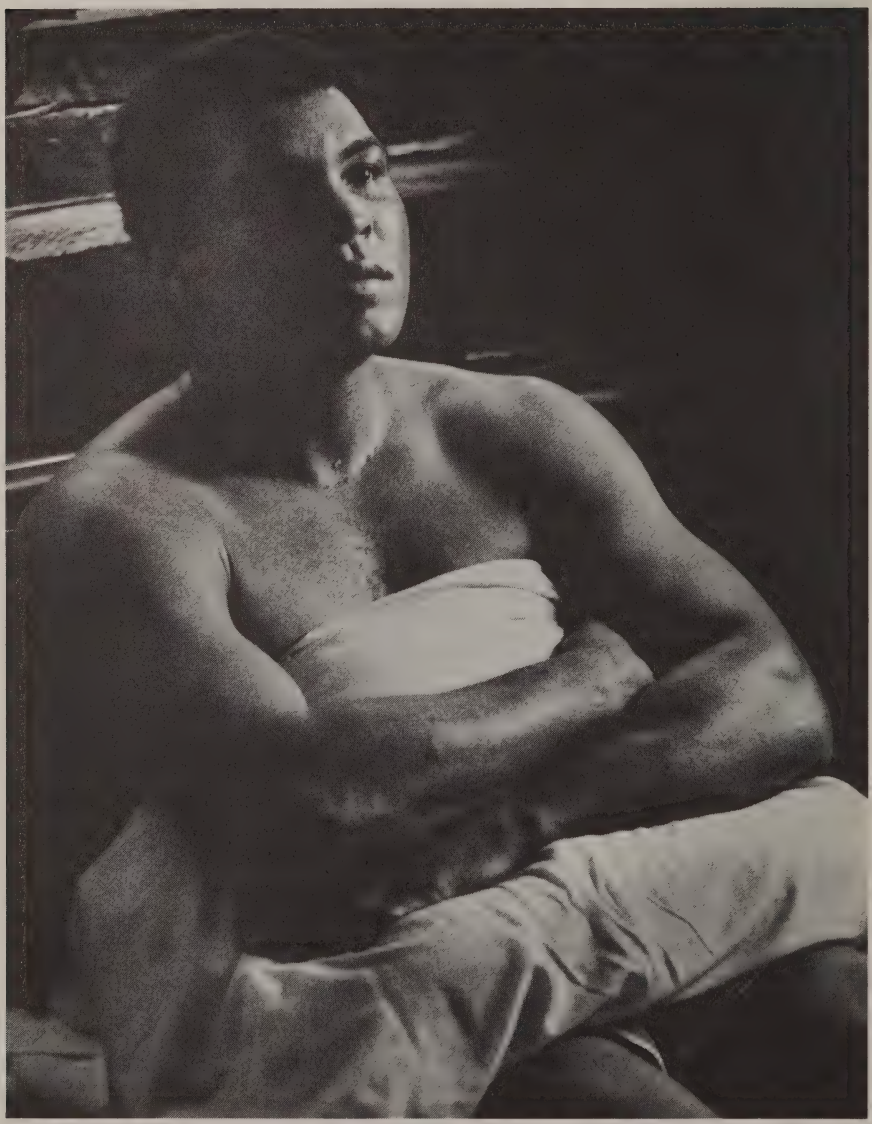
We work together, play together, and on a man's birthday we have a little celebration and make sure he gets a card. I think it's good for them to know what a good Christian family can be like.

Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

Muhammad Ali

"Service to others is the rent we pay for our room in heaven. . . ."

by BRUCE NIXON



DEER LAKE is hardly more than a hamlet in the foothills of the Poconos in Pennsylvania's northeastern coal region. A couple of gas stations, an abandoned drive-in movie, a small diner, a general store, a run-down motel. On the mountain above the highway, Muhammad Ali's training camp is hidden among broad, leafy trees. The road up to the camp is unmarked.

At the head of the winding road, near the entrance to the training camp, a huge man wearing a grey workout suit was directing occasional automobiles into a dusty parking lot. Right there, along the border of the lot, was a small white church.

"The church is the nearest building to the road," the former heavyweight champion would explain later. "It's the first thing you see. It reminds you that spiritual concerns come first."

This was back in September.

Muhammad Ali was at Deer Lake preparing to meet World Boxing Council champion Larry Holmes, in an effort to win the title for a fourth time in his two decade-long career. The fight was in Las Vegas. Within a week, Ali would be on his way there to continue training.

At Deer Lake—a spartan camp of two dozen or so log cabins, with a large gym and cookhouse—he'd rise before dawn and run in the early morning mist along the backroads and trails that comb the valley below camp. Following a midday nap, he'd spar and work out. After a massage and shower, the work was done: Ali greeted the fans who had come to camp, signing autographs, shaking hands, kissing babies. Taking infants in his large hands, Ali is gentle—even tender—and he calms their uncertain crying easily. They cling to him. This is a relaxed place, and serene; a place to work undistracted.

Ali was preparing for an important fight. It was held in early October; if he'd won, it would have given him an unprecedented fourth heavyweight crown. That would have been difficult, perhaps impossible, to top.

In his last days at Deer Lake, Ali was quiet—even humble. He answered questions thoroughly, patiently. His voice was slow and deliberate; at times, it dropped to a thoughtful whisper. Then, suddenly, the words would come tumbling out, falling over each other in a rush to escape. But Ali was always calm. He seemed vaguely preoccupied, as if he had somehow accepted everything to come, or as if he were in a state of perpetual meditation.

He talked a good deal about the details of the upcoming fight *(now over)* and his rivalry with Larry Holmes, but he seemed eager—insistent at times—to explain his spiritual beliefs and the role they would play in his life during the days ahead.

"If I wasn't a boxer, I'd be a master of truth," he said. He was lounging in an overstuffed armchair in his cabin, nipping flies with a red and white swatter while he talked. "I love to lecture and talk to people. I go all over the country preaching to people about God. I'm a preacher-man. I love to preach. Say! Look at my fights. Ali comes back in the last twenty seconds. How? Allah comes to my aid. He goes into my arms and pulls me through."

Over and over again, Ali spoke about his training diet. Following Muslim precepts, he is a vegetarian, and doesn't smoke or use alcohol.

"This is the holy way," he said. "It will give me strength. People think my age is against me because I'm thirty-seven. But because of the Muslim religion, because I don't eat meats and don't touch alcohol, I've got a younger body."

And he spoke tirelessly about the World Organization for Liberty and Dignity, a project he's pushed for many years. He wants to feed the people of the world, he explained; it is an organization for world peace, and a worldwide network which would fight poverty, cultural disadvantage, disease. He also talked of the people whom he says support this plan of his: religious figures like Billy Graham and Oral Roberts, foreign leaders, professional athletes and politicians. He spoke of the things he would provide with the millions he has won in the ring.

"My Muslim teaching gave me this heart," Ali said. "This is my drive. Holmes will be looking to finish his house with a swimming pool with the money he gets from this fight. His thing is personal. Mine is not. I got a goal. I got a purpose in life."

Ali announced his Muslim conversion shortly after he won the heavyweight crown for the first time in the early 'sixties. He explained, simply enough that he had been called and chosen. The strength of his belief was put to the test for the first time when he was drafted, and refused induction on religious grounds. He did not go into the army, but ultimately was stripped of his title.

"The world is my home," Ali said in September. "Every country is like a different room, and all the people are my brothers and sisters. Service to others is the rent we pay for our room in heaven. God will judge us when we die. This house will be standing when I'm gone. I'm a trustee here, and my duty is to do good for others. I say my prayers every morning."

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What Was The Rose?

by MARION SCHOBERLEIN

What was the rose before it pillowed out its big red petals?
Rabbits and foxes looked at it and
    had their own secret thoughts.
Mother's poor, work-ruined hands grew it
    and they had to come up for her.

Maybe the rose was a sweet, sticky wine in the earth
    before she was born—
Now she mingles with the green-blue bush
    and says "God" in quiet fire,
The rose is the pale pink brain of angel laughing each day
    the poem of "I love you!"

Relinquishment

by DORIS FAULKNER

IT was the last afternoon of my son's life. At the age of forty-six, Dick was losing his valiant battle against cancer. The doctor had informed the family that the end would come at any time. In the silence of that saddened house, we each took our turn spending a few minutes alone with him.

As I sat dry-eyed by his bedside during that last farewell, I realized I had not yet passed through all the stages of grief. The customary denial, anger, and bargaining had all taken place during the sixteen months since we had first learned the grim prognosis. Depression had been present from the beginning, but acceptance was by far the most difficult to handle. I certainly did not wish to see him suffer any longer, so why did I continue to pray, "Not yet, dear God, not yet!"?

Although his father and I discussed many things with Dick during those last weeks, we somehow had never been able to bring up the subject of God's everlasting love and care. Now time was running out.

Dick appeared to be asleep, but presently his hand reached out for mine. As I held it, the comforting words of the Twenty-third Psalm came to mind. Softly I began to recite "The Lord is my shepherd." When I reached "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," Dick's fingers tightened over mine with a strength I would not have believed possible.

A beam of light from the setting sun came to rest on his face, and for one fleeting moment his wasted features appeared to be restored to the warmth and color of glowing health.

He continued to hold my hand while I finished the Psalm—"And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever"—and then quietly, with a radiant smile, relaxed his grasp and sank into peaceful sleep.

This time the tears came—not the hopeless, bitter tears of the past, but the gentle and healing ones of acceptance, as I whispered: "Into Thy hands, Father. Into *Thy* hands. . . ."

Garden—a piece of ground for the growing of fruits, flowers, vegetables: it is usually close to a home.

More Than A Garden

by BARBARA SARKESIAN

A CONCISE, accurate dictionary definition as far as it goes, because a garden can be much more than that. At least I'll forever look on one differently since that August day.

Almost five summers have passed since my father suffered a mild stroke. For years up till then we had been one of those families blessed with good health. Even though I was a grown woman in my late thirties, I had never had the experience of seeing a man full of vitality one moment become merely a vestige of himself the next: the focus of a close family reduced to almost baby-like helplessness. It was more than a sensitive, perhaps overly-sheltered person like myself could bear.

While we waited for the doctor to arrive that August day, I decided to relieve my anxiety by going outdoors in the yard. It was an exceptionally lovely day, clear and cool like September. I remember wondering how anything unpleasant could happen on such a beautiful day. . . . Our home is in the country, right in the middle of an old apple orchard. In the back yard, between two Baldwin apple trees, is a small flower garden. It was my habit every day in summer to check over the garden—to pull weeds, pick off faded blossoms, and so forth, all the things a conscientious gardener must do. But, on that particular day, I was not interested in these mundane chores. Instead, I just stood there, staring vacantly at the garden, my heart filled with worry and fear.

After a few moments, I became aware of a reddish-brown fluttering. A butterfly had alighted on the wrought-iron plaque which is on one side of the garden, and then moved on to something more to its liking—a pink petunia. Its

action drew my eye to the plaque. It is a simple garden ornament, quite common, I think, black, with a design of blue and yellow flowers, and inscribed with this verse:

The Kiss of the Sun for Pardon,
The Song of the Birds for Mirth,
One is nearer God's Heart in a Garden
Than anywhere else on Earth.

The plaque had been in that spot for several years. Visitors often commented on it. But, that day, it was as though I saw it for the first time:

One is nearer God's Heart in a Garden
Than anywhere else on Earth.

Here? In this garden? I asked myself. It was just a simple garden of yellow marigolds, orange zinnias, pink petunias, and lavender glads, with a sun dial in the center, all enclosed by a miniature white picket fence. It was a busy place for bees and hummingbirds and a source of never-ending work and pleasure for me. If I were really close to God's heart here, then what better place to pray? I stood there on that lovely afternoon and prayed for my father's recovery and for strength to deal with whatever was to come.

I made a ritual of this for the next few days, sometimes going out to the garden in the early morning while dew was still on the flowers, and, once, at dusk, when the accompaniment to my prayer was the haunting song of the wood thrush. Each day I seemed to manage a bit better, gaining a certain measure of hope, confidence, and peace. In this way I lived through a difficult time.

By the middle of the week my father had shown such steady improvement that the doctor decided a hospital stay was unnecessary. By the end of the week I could write in the diary which I normally used for nature notations: "A real miracle has happened. Dad's all better!"

As I look back on it now, "all better" was an exaggeration. My father was with us a year longer, most of the time with his usual warmth and sense of humor. I still think I would describe it as "a real miracle."

Almost five years have passed since then, since I, in truth, discovered my garden. Whenever I feel anxious or troubled, I find myself drawn there, to stand quietly by, perhaps to say a prayer or two. This has happened in all seasons: in the fall, when the garden is an unkempt jumble of marigolds, fallen apples, and leaves; in the middle of winter, when the pickets have disappeared under snow; in spring, when the soil has been turned over and is ready for planting. It doesn't matter which season it is, because each time I never fail to see that there I am nearer God's Heart than anywhere else on earth.

LETTERS

Dear Sir:

It gave us much pleasure to read *(in "Interviews With Miss Brown," published by Fellowship in Prayer in September of 1980)* Miss Brown's mention of The Seekers Trust and their work through prayer, perhaps better known as The Harmony Prayer Circles.

Charles Simpson established The Harmony Prayer Circles in London in 1926 after a time of what can only be described as a period of great testing. The organization was able to carry on its work of healing and praying throughout the years of the Second World War. Such was the degree of spiritual protection that none of the people concerned with The Seekers at their London headquarters suffered injury, nor did the property. The small estate at Addington in Kent, however, suffered extensively. After the war, The Seekers gained new momentum as a result of worldwide unhappiness and disillusionment.

Unknown to each other, Charles Simpson and Carl Evans, founder of Fellowship in Prayer in 1949, had at heart the same ideals for the rehabilitation of mankind through prayer. Like Fellowship in Prayer, The Seekers is non-denominational. Frances Banks, late President of The Seekers, wrote: "The Seekers have throughout their course preserved a basic safeguard in that, although essentially Christian, they have as a body remained free from any special religious affiliation, church or denomination, while at the same time being individually free to maintain active membership in any place of worship."

Charles Simpson was forty-five years old whn he was gifted with the power of healing the sick and suffering, and opened his first clinic in a well-scrubbed coal cellar in a dingy street in London. Although he soon moved to larger premises, all the people wanting to be healed could not be accomodated. Thus he was inspired to formulate a system of prayer for Absent Healing, which brought The Harmony Prayer Circles into existence. The procedure was based on the promise of Jesus that "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them." Because prayer is the means of communication between God and man, each word of prayer should be uttered with full understanding of its spiritual significance and in the knowledge that certain vibrations are released which are for "the healing of the nations" and of course for individuals. We believe that as well as placing their names on prayer lists, such patients must also pray in their own homes at the same time using the same prayers. Each prayer circle finds up to six persons sitting around the altar and offering themselves as channels for the work of healing through prayer: All prayers finish with The Prayer for Peace.

—The Seekers Trust
Addington Park, Maidstone,
Kent. ME 19 5 BL.England

Sunrise Miracle

by FLORENCE POWERS

It was a lazy afternoon during the depression of the nineteen twenties. My mother in law and I were busy breaking green beans for canning on the back porch. My husband had only a day or so of work in a city fifty miles away and we usually came back on the idle days to help a neighbor gather his corn. It also provided us with food, for there was plenty on the farm.

My two year old was playing inside the house as we idly talked and worked. She was tiny for her age, but very bright and had learned to talk when only a year old. I had just noticed she was very quiet and was getting up to see about her when we heard her scream. Both of us ran and found her standing in the middle of the kitchen floor. Her tongue was brown with some kind of substance, and she was clawing at it. I didn't know what it was, but her grandmother was calling the doctor.

We were three miles out in the country, but the doctor left a room full of patients and got there as soon as he could. He examined her but did not give us good news.

"The nature of the medicine causes scars," he said. "If too much has gone down her throat, it may close it, and even if it hasn't, she may not be able to talk again."

He advised us to take her to a throat specialist fifteen miles away and went back to his patients. By that time her lower lip had turned down on her chin. My arm was brown from working with her. Our car was old and that fifteen miles was the longest ride we ever made in our lives. The doctor was waiting for us as we rushed into the office. After his examination, he said the medicine had irritated her throat and lungs enough that she would probably have pneumonia. Only time would tell if she would be able to talk. He said to put her to bed, cover her well and open the windows to give her plenty of air. That was all we could do, he said.

Although we were both very frightened, we knew there was more we could do. We had always gone to church, and from the start we had both been praying as hard as we knew how. We did as the doctor said, but by eleven that night she began to breathe very hard. Her grandmother had her home remedies and was soon putting hot cloths saturated with it on her back and chest. We kept it up around the clock. For three days we worked until we were all exhausted. She lay there so quiet except for her labored breathing.

On the morning of the fourth day her grandmother came to take her turn. Wearily, I knew I must get away for awhile. I walked out into the pre-dawn darkness and went slowly down the lane. I sat down on a huge tree stump. And then the tears came in a flood.

"Please, God," I begged, "save my baby. We waited so long for her. I know you can heal her. She has so much to live for. Please God make her well."

Suddenly I felt a great warmth about me. I lifted up my brimming eyes.

The sun had come over the horizon in one beautiful sunrise. It seemed to promise to me that a new day was here and God had heard my prayer.

I rose and started for the house. Faster and faster I ran. I went into my baby's room and she was sitting up smiling at me. I knelt by her bed and took her in my arms. The tears came again, but this time they were tears of joy. Her little hands patted my face.

"Don't cry, Mama." she said. "I'm all better now. I'm hungry, Mama. Can I have breakfast now?"

It has been over forty years now since God heard and answered my prayer that day. My baby is a mother and a grandmother herself now. Today we are celebrating our fiftieth anniversary and as we look back over the years, we remember all the times He has heard us, as He did on that day long ago.

The I-Ching

WHY do you consult the I Ching? Why does it work? Because the way the coins fall or the way the sticks are sorted reveals the quality of the moment, gives you a clue to what is the spiritual quality of that time, and so helps you relate to the eternal nature of human beings and your eternal destiny. Therefore it is not predicting what is going to happen, but it is predicting how you can live most creatively here so you can avoid pitfalls. And you can live this way; it isn't inevitable that you fall into bad moments. If it is a bad time coming up, if the stars or the I Ching suggest that it is a dangerous time, then one withdraws into one's silence and lets the storm pass over.

The problem with fortune-telling is that the fortune-teller thinks these things have to happen. The very purpose of real inquiry into the nature of things is to avoid evil and facilitate creativity and good.

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 1)

Because of the positive response to our recent special issues—Report on Holistic Health and *Interviews with Miss Brown*—we are pleased to announce that, beginning with this issue, this publication is becoming a monthly. Future issues will be devoted to a variety of subjects relevant to the work of the Fellowship, such as a unique Russian Orthodox community in New Jersey, the spiritual adventures of individuals who do not attend church, synagogue, or temple, the prayers of American Indians, a new translation of Lao Tzu's classic *Tao Teh Ching*, a survey of the spiritual aspects of contemporary arts, and a memorial to the late Dr William Hung, one of Fellowship in Prayer's founding members.

Our change into a monthly publication demands a change in our subscription rate, which now becomes twelve dollars per year. For those who were subscribers as of May 1, 1981, the rate will stay at five dollars for one more year although additional contributions will, as always, be gratefully received. For anyone unable to pay the new rate who sincerely desires to receive the publication, it is suggested that a communication of these facts be sent to our Executive Secretary, Ms. Joy Reynolds.

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Fellowship in Prayer
20 Nassau Street, Suite 250 East
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I enclose $_____as a donation to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER for the monthly publication. ($12.00 covers the cost of printing, handling, and mailing for one year. Larger donations cover the cost of copies given to persons unable to make a donation.)

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Five days before her death last March, Contributing Editor Mildred Long wrote the following letter, which has been forwarded to us by Contributing Editor Nixeon Civille Handy.

"READY"

To all my dear ones, my Christian friends, all who love our Lord and His Kingdom:

This morning (2 A.M.) I came to perfect peace about the matter of going Home. I am ready—ready, not dictating as to when, where, or how—just ready. As perfectly submissive as I know how to be, putting my arms in His vast Everlasting Arms, now and forever. If my being in submission isn't enough for me to be in perfect readiness, then I pray Him to make all things right.

All of us experience these failing physical shadows and darkness, but we have hundreds of promises to uphold us. Hold tight. It isn't easy, but Jesus' way wasn't easy, either.

My time of going is entirely in His hands. . . .

Let love and peace prepare your hearts. Be faithful in quietness and know for yourself that whatever you have done in love for Christ cannot and will not be lost.

You might question many things; most of us do. Submit all. . . .Let nothing disturb you. Patient endurance attaineth all things. Like the new convert, we have to hold to facts, not feelings. So claim His Love, Presence, and Power to keep. Doubt not at all.

Some day we shall meet over there in His Eternal Glory. Till then, may His Precious Love enfold you.

Your friend and fellow Christian,
MILDRED LONG

How To Love God

IN the sight of God, thoughts count for little, love means everything. It is not necessary to have great things to do. I can turn my little omelet in the pan for the love of God. When that is done, and if I have nothing more to do, I can prostrate myself on the ground and adore God, who has given me the grace to do what I have done; then I rise happier than a king. When I can do nothing else, I can always pick up a straw from the ground for the love of God. . . .

MEN seek methods for learning how to love God. They want to reach their goal by I do not know how many different practices. They go to a lot of trouble to stay in His presence in a great number of ways. Is it not much shorter and far more direct to do all things for His love, to make use of all the duties of one's state to express our love for Him, and to maintain His presence in us by our heart's commerce with Him? We need not go about this in any subtle way. All we must do is simply do what we do.

—Brother Lawrence

ASK

If
a prayer
is needed for someone
or for yourself,
let us know.

Write
or phone: (609) 924-0880

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RENUNCIATION

No renunciation can be commanded.
No renunciation can be demanded.
Renunciation has to grow from within.
Renunciation has to flow from without.
Man renounces the futility of his ignorance-night.
God announces Man, Infinity's Light.

From Sri Chinmoy Ghose, "Meditations for the Soul"
(Harper & Row, New York, 1971.)

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